

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Nina Thompson  
619-372-0916 cell  
[nthompson@sdhumane.org](mailto:nthompson@sdhumane.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**DEC. 5, 2023**

## **Top Ten Holiday Dangers for Pets**

*Know which foods, decorations and plants are hazardous to prevent unexpected emergencies*

**SAN DIEGO** — With the holiday season in full swing, San Diego Humane Society reminds pet owners to take precautions to keep their pets safe. Presents, decorations, plants and holiday foods can sometimes be harmful for our furry friends.

### **Here are the Top 10 Holiday Dangers for Pets:**

**1. Christmas trees:** Christmas trees can be hazardous, especially for climbing cats. Make sure your tree is secure, preferably in a corner to reduce the likelihood of falling. Keep dangerous ornaments, such as those made of glass and tinsel (which can be choking hazards), on high branches and out of the reach of little paws.



**2. Wrapped presents:** If you are wrapping gifts — especially those containing food (particularly chocolate), dog treats or dog toys — keep them out of your pet’s reach until they are ready to be opened. Pets have a keen sense of smell and will often unwrap presents early and eat the potentially harmful contents.

**3. Holiday food:** Pets are often not shy about taking food that is left sitting out on counters or tables. Pets should be kept away from food preparation areas or places where food will be left out unattended or for long periods of time. A few concerning foods that are common during the holidays include chocolate, bread dough, grapes/raisins, fruitcake and alcohol.

**4. Toxic plants:** Amaryllis, Christmas cactus, Christmas rose, evergreens, holly, ivy, juniper, lilies, mistletoe and poinsettias are examples of plants that can cause digestive upset or more severe toxicity to pets if eaten.

**5. Unsafe pet toys:** You will see many toys marketed as holiday gifts to pets this season — but that doesn’t necessarily mean they’re safe for animals. Avoid pet toys that could be dangerous, such as those with easily detachable parts like sequins, buttons or ribbons. These items can be choking hazards or cause gastrointestinal blockages if ingested. If toys have stuffing or plastic squeakers, it’s important to supervise playtime to prevent accidental ingestion.

**6. Fire and string lights:** Roaring fires and twinkling lights are common around the holidays, but can cause danger to pets. Place burning candles high, out of your pet’s way. A dog’s tail wag or a cat’s curiosity could be devastating. Homes with fireplaces should use screens to avoid accidental burns. Cords from electrical string lights should be taped down or otherwise secured to prevent pets from chewing on them.

**7. Snow globes:** Some snow globes contain ethylene glycol, which is highly toxic to all pets. If a snow globe is broken, the sweet smell can attract a pet to lick it up, leading to a potentially fatal intoxication. As a precaution, snow globes should be kept out of reach of pets.



**8. Medication:** If you have visitors, pets may investigate suitcases and can get into their medications, such as pill bottles or weekly pill minders. It is safer to have the visitors put their medication in a closed cabinet that is not accessible to pets.

**9. Salt:** Ice melt, homemade play dough and salt-dough ornaments (even when dry) can be tempting salty treats for pets, but can all also cause life-threatening imbalances in electrolytes. Pet owners should contact their local veterinary professional or the [Animal Poison Control Center](#) if their pets get into any of these substances.

**10. Open doors:** Keep your pets safely indoors and always make sure they're wearing current ID tags with your phone number. Holiday distractions make it easier for pets to escape through open doors. Make sure their microchip information is up to date. If your pet is not microchipped, San Diego Humane Society offers \$25 microchips at its El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside and San Diego Campus locations. Schedule an appointment at [sdhumane.org/microchip](http://sdhumane.org/microchip).

During the holidays, it's also important to make sure your pet has a quiet, secure place to escape the commotion. Our pets can become stressed with noise and activity and want somewhere safe to relax. Make sure they have their bed, favorite toys, food and water, and a litter box for cats. Keep them on their regular schedule for feeding and exercise. Pets thrive on routine and increased activity during the holiday season can upset that routine. As always, be sure they get plenty of love and attention from you! For more information, visit [sdhumane.org/holidaysafety](http://sdhumane.org/holidaysafety).

**Photos/b-roll for media use can be downloaded here:**

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/PcHtoOmnv6>

**Photo /video credit: San Diego Humane Society**

#### **About San Diego Humane Society**

San Diego Humane Society's scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, visit [sdhumane.org](http://sdhumane.org).

###